



<b>Title</b>	<b>Sleep and Rest Policy</b>
<b>Policy Category</b>	Childrens Programs
<b>Policy Type</b>	Mandatory
<b>NQF Standard</b>	NQS: Quality Area 2
<b>Related Legislation</b>	See legislation map

### Background and Context

This policy will provide clear guidelines for the implementation of safe relaxation and sleep practices that meet the individual needs of children attending GEKA services.

GEKA is committed to:

- providing a positive and nurturing environment for all children attending the service
- recognising that children have different requirements for relaxation and sleep, and being responsive to those needs to ensure that children feel safe and secure at the service
- consulting with parents/guardians about their child’s individual relaxation and sleep requirements/practices, and ensuring practices at the service are responsive to the values and cultural beliefs of each family
- its duty of care (refer to Definitions) to all children at GEKA, and ensuring that adequate supervision (refer to Definitions) is maintained while children are sleeping, resting or relaxing
- complying with all legislative requirements, standards and current best practice and guidelines, including recommendations by Red Nose <https://rednose.org.au/>

The *Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)* and the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF)* include a focus on social, emotional, spiritual and physical wellbeing and health. Outcome 3 in both framework documents refers to a child’s ability to take increasing responsibility for their own wellbeing. One of the indicators for this capacity is that children “recognise and communicate their bodily needs (for example thirst, hunger, rest, comfort, physical activity)”. The EYLF suggests that to promote this, educators should:

- consider the pace of the day within the context of the community
- provide a range of active and restful experiences throughout the day, and support children to make appropriate decisions regarding participation.

Employers have a responsibility under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* to provide a safe and healthy working environment. This duty extends to others present in the workplace, including children and volunteers. Providing a safe environment for children at the service includes complying with current Australian/New Zealand standards in relation to equipment, such as cots and mattresses.

### Scope

This policy applies to GEKA, Nominated Supervisor, Certified Supervisor, educators, staff, students on

placement, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of GEKA, including during offsite excursions and activities.

## Definitions

**Adequate supervision:** (In relation to this policy) entails all children (individuals and groups) in all areas of the service, being in sight and/or hearing of an educator at all times including during toileting, sleep, rest and transition routines. Services are required to comply with the legislative requirements for educator-to-child ratios at all times. Supervision contributes to protecting children from hazards that may emerge in play, including hazards created by the equipment used.

Adequate supervision refers to constant, active and diligent supervision of every child at the service. Adequate supervision requires that educators are always in a position to observe each child, respond to individual needs, and immediately intervene if necessary. Variables affecting supervision levels include:

- number, age and abilities of children
- number and positioning of educators
- current activity of each child
- areas in which the children are engaged in an activity (visibility and accessibility)
- developmental profile of each child and of the group of children
- experience, knowledge and skill of each educator
- need for educators to move between areas (effective communication strategies).

**Duty of care:** A common law concept that refers to the responsibilities of organisations to provide people with an adequate level of protection against harm and all reasonable foreseeable risk of injury.

**GEKA Leader:** A person who is nominated by GEKA Management to provide leadership and mentoring (operational and educational) across the organisation, that aligns with the National Early Years Framework and who actively promotes and ensures adherence to all GEKA practices, policies and procedures

**Nominated Supervisor:** A person who has been nominated by GEKA under Part 3 of the Act and who has consented to that nomination in writing can be the Nominated Supervisor. All services must have a Nominated Supervisor(s) with responsibility for the service in accordance with the National Regulations (Section 5 and 161).

**Red Nose:** (formerly SIDS and Kids), the recognised national authority on safe sleeping practices for infants and children <https://rednose.org.au/>

**Relaxation/rest:** A period of inactivity, solitude, calmness or tranquillity.

**Responsible Person:** The responsible person is the person in day to day charge at the service and can be one of the following:

- the approved provider (if the approved provider is an individual), and in their absence,
- the nominated supervisor, and in their absence,

**SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome):** The unexpected and unexplained death of an infant, usually occurring during sleep.

## Policy

### Responsibilities

#### **GEKA is responsible for:**

- taking reasonable steps to ensure the sleep/rest needs of children at the service are met, with regard to the age of children, developmental stages and individual needs (Regulation 81(1))
- regularly reviewing practices to ensure compliance with the recommendations of Red Nose in relation to safe sleeping practices for children
- providing information and training to ensure staff are kept informed of changing practices in relation to safe sleep/rest practices for children
- ensuring parents/guardians are consulted about appropriate relaxation and sleep practices for their child
- protecting children from hazards and harm (Section 167)
- ensuring that hammocks, prams and strollers are not used to settle children to sleep or for rest
- consulting with staff in relation to WHS issues when purchasing new equipment for the service
- ensuring compliance with WorkSafe Victoria's Children's services – occupational health and safety compliance kit, including in relation to staff lifting children
- ensuring adequate supervision of children at the service at all times, including during relaxation and sleep
- ensuring that rooms used for rest and relaxation are well ventilated
- ensuring that there is adequate space to store bedding (i.e., pillows, blankets, cushions) in a hygienic manner (refer to Hygiene Policy) if appropriate

#### **The Nominated Supervisor/GEKA Leader is responsible for:**

- taking reasonable steps to ensure the sleep/rest needs of children at the service are met with regard to the age of children, developmental stages and individual needs (Regulation 81(2))
- ensuring the educational program provides opportunities for each child to rest or engage in appropriate quiet play activities, as required
- protecting children from hazards and harm (Section 167)
- removing any hazards identified in the child's resting or sleeping environment and informing GEKA Management, as soon as is practicable
- ensuring all staff and educators comply with the recommendations of Red Nose (refer to definitions) in relation to safe sleeping practices for children
- educating families about evidence-based safe sleeping practices
- assessing whether there are exceptional circumstances for alternative practices where family beliefs conflict with current recommended evidence-based guidelines for safe sleeping practices, seek written support from a professional and develop a risk management plan
- ensuring all staff and educators comply with WorkSafe Victoria's Children's services – occupational health and safety compliance kit in relation to lifting children
- ensuring adequate supervision of children at the service at all times, including during relaxation and sleep
- storing items such as bedding (i.e., pillows, blankets, cushions) in a hygienic manner to prevent cross-contamination (refer to *Hygiene Policy*) if appropriate.

#### **All educators and other staff are responsible for:**

- providing each child with appropriate opportunities for relaxation and sleep according to their needs
- complying with the recommendations of Red Nose in relation to safe sleeping practices for children

- developing relaxation and sleep practices that are responsive to:
  - the individual needs and rhythms of children at the service
  - parenting beliefs, values, practices and requirements
  - the length of time each child spends at the service
  - circumstance or events occurring at a child's home
  - consistency of practice between home and the service
  - a child's general health and wellbeing
  - the physical environment, including room temperature, lighting, airflow and noise levels
- educating families about evidence-based safe sleeping practices
- implementing the documented sleep regime and risk management strategies where in exceptional circumstances family beliefs conflict with current recommended evidence-based guidelines for safe sleeping practices
- minimising distress or discomfort for the children in their care
- ensuring that resting and sleeping practices are not used as a behaviour guidance strategy (refer to *Interactions with Children Policy*)
- providing a range of opportunities for relaxation throughout the day
- complying with WorkSafe Victoria's Children's services – occupational health and safety compliance kit, including in relation to lifting children
- providing input in relation to WHS issues when new equipment is purchased for the service
- conducting regular safety checks of equipment used for sleeping/resting
- removing any hazards identified in the child's resting or sleeping environment and informing the Nominated Supervisor or GEKA Management, as soon as is practicable
- ensuring that any hanging cords, mobiles, curtains and blinds are inaccessible to children who are resting or sleeping
- providing adequate supervision (refer to *Definitions*) of all children, including during sleep, rest and relaxation
- supervising children displaying symptoms of illness closely, especially when resting or sleeping (refer to *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy*)
- ensuring that artificial heating, such as heat bags and hot-water bottles, is not used to provide warmth
- providing information to families about the service's relaxation and sleep practices
- developing communication strategies to inform parents/guardians about their child's rest and sleep patterns, including times and length of sleep
- encouraging children's independence, and assisting children with dressing as needed.

**Parents/guardians are responsible for:**

- discussing their child's relaxation and sleep requirements and practices prior to commencing at the service, and when these requirements change
- providing information on the child's getting to know you form (as part of enrolment) if the child requires special items while resting or sleeping e.g. a comforter or soft toy

**Volunteers and students, while at the service, are responsible for following this policy and its procedures.**

**Approvals and Revision**

Date	Version	Author	Revision Description
Q4 2017	1.00	GEKA Management	New Policy
Q1 2021	3.00	GEKA Management	Annual Review